



August 17, 2010

For more information, contact Peter Hancock  
Public Information Officer  
785/296-5603  
[Peter.Hancock@khpa.ks.gov](mailto:Peter.Hancock@khpa.ks.gov)

## **KHPA Receives \$1.2 Million Federal Bonus Payment** *Funds Will Help Relieve Applications Backlog*

(TOPEKA) – The Kansas Health Policy Authority has been awarded a \$1.2 million Children’s Health Insurance Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) bonus payment from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The money will be used immediately to help alleviate a backlog of applications at its Eligibility Clearinghouse, which processes applications for HealthWave.

The bonus is part of an incentive program under the 2009 federal CHIPRA legislation. The bonus payments were established as an incentive for states to increase coverage of children under Medicaid and CHIP.

“This is very good news for Kansas,” said Dr. Barb Langner, Kansas state Medicaid Director. “In recent years we’ve been doing things to make it smoother and more convenient for children to receive Medicaid and CHIP. But at the same time, as the economy worsened, we had a large increase in the volume of applications coming in along with some significant budget reductions. So the result is that we now have a large backlog of about 16,000 applications that have been waiting to be processed for more than 45 days.”

During State Fiscal Year 2010, an average of 39,361 children were covered by CHIP during any given month, a 10.5 percent increase over SFY 2007. Over that same period, the number of children eligible and enrolled in Medicaid due to their poverty status grew 23.5 percent – from 81,779 to 100,957.

Langner said the money will help fund additional temporary staff at the Clearinghouse operation to reduce the backlog of applications. The Clearinghouse is operated by a contractor, Policy Studies, Inc. (PSI). In addition, she said, KHPA is taking other actions to speed up the processing of applications, including simplifying the process of verifying an applicant’s income. She said that with those measures, KHPA hopes to eliminate the backlog within the next six months.

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Rm. 900-N, Landon Building, 900 SW Jackson Street, Topeka, KS 66612-1220  
[www.khpa.ks.gov](http://www.khpa.ks.gov)

Medicaid and HealthWave:  
Phone: 785-296-3981  
Fax: 785-296-4813

State Employee Health  
Benefits and Plan Purchasing:  
Phone: 785-368-6361  
Fax: 785-368-7180

State Self Insurance Fund:  
Phone: 785-296-2364  
Fax: 785-296-6995